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ABSTRACT

The author presents a tested method for the judging of intercollegiate debate rounds. The procedure utilizes three types of judges for each round: the forensics expert, the non-forensics layman, and a student participant. Their decisions would be entered immediately on a debate evaluation grid. The tournament schedule would provide time at the end of each round for the panel of judges to discuss their decisions with the participants. The author sees the advantages of the procedure as, first, broadening and complementing the existing standard practices, and second, providing immediate feedback to the debaters rather than giving them comments after a considerable delay. (Author/RN)

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A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL EVALUATION PROCEDURE FOR INTERCOLLEGIATE DEBATE

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A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL EVALUATION METHOD FOR INTERCOLLEGIATE DEBATE

The decision is a major objective in tournament debating. The value of the decision to the debaters is a function of the decision making method. The prevailing judging method consists of one "expert" judge in early rounds and several "expert" judges in the different types of finals. Effective and valuable as this method may be, it appears to deny the debater the advantages of a multi-dimensional method.

Another feature of prevailing judging methods is that disclosure of the results is not made until final phases (in terms of who goes on to the finals) and at the Results and Awards Session. Even then, information regarding the backgrounds of the decisions is made available only in the form of the ballots which are usually distributed at the end of the Results and Awards Session. Again, the ballot information is valuable, but it reaches the debater concerned after a time lag.

I have no quarrel at all with the above methods of judging and revealing the results of that judging. I simply feel that another set of procedures could complement, in contrast to replace, existing methods, and thereby increase the value of the debating experience.

Specifically three changes can be made. One, the judging base can be broadened by using three types of judges (as presented in the Multi-Dimensional Debate Evaluation Grid below). The three types involved are Expert Forensics Judge, Lay Judge, and Participant Debater. Two,

results can be revealed immediately after each individual debate. Three, the Multi-Dimensional Procedure itself can be reviewed and evaluated after each debate.

The need for broader base for judging is based upon the assumption that effective persuasion is not limited to the items and judges concerned with the traditional debate ballot. By involving different types of judges and additional criteria, a decision is reached which may be more valuable because of the scope of its components.

There is much scientific evidence (e.g. Skinner in Technology of Teaching) which supports the value of immediate feedback regarding performance when learning is involved.

A similar dynamic of immediacy is built into this Multi-Dimensional Evaluation procedure in that part of the method calls for feedback regarding the procedure itself.

Please remember the procedure is considered to be complementary to other methods, flexible, and experimental.

I have used the procedure when Director of Forensics at Nebraska Wesleyan University, Director of Debate at the University, Director of Debate at the University of Southern California, and Forensics Director at California State University, Long Beach. Reaction was favorable. However, in the interest of objectivity and fairness to the reader or listener, I must point out that they were intra-squad applications. I have discussed it with Forensics coaches and debaters. I would characterize their reactions as interested. The method seems sound to me. However, I present it as a promising proposal, not as a proven procedure.

DIMENSIONS

Different Judges

I propose judges representing three different perspectives: First, a judge or judges schooled in the debate of the Forensics circuit; second, a judge, or judges, who would be laymen (non-forensic, but competent) from either the educational or political community; third, a student debater from each side who had just participated in the debate being evaluated. These three positions would be weighted with reference to the decision in the order stated, with a ratio of 5/10, 3/10, and 2/10 for the forensics, lay and debater judges respectively.

Results Revealation

In contrast to customary tournament practice results and information regarding them would be revealed much earlier. The revealation would assume two patterns. The first would follow each round of debate; the second would be at the end of the meet.

The pattern following each round would be as follows: As soon as ballots were completed phase one, consisting of consolidation of the three judging results, would begin. (This would be accomplished on the grid to be presented later.) Phase two, consisting of discussion of results, explanations, and remarks regarding the prc edure itself, complet. s pattern one. The information generated is recorded on the grid. (Grid is made out in triplicate with copies for each team and for tournament officials.)

The second, or wind-up, pattern occurs at the end of the meet. Its phases are similar in nature and purpose to the after-round activities, however they are broader in scope. The first phase consists of a discussion

of these results and an evaluation of the multi-dimensional procedure itself.

Master Judging Grid

Each of the types of judges use different ballots. The forensics judge would use a conventional ballot. The lay judge would judge in an unstructured manner rendering his decision in narrative type form, including reasons for his decision. The debater participant would be guided by the conventional ballot but fill in only the portions of it that he felt to be significant. (His ballot would be completed immediately after the debate.)

Decisions of these three judges would be transposed to the Master Grid according to numerical weights and categories.

Judge:	Aspects: Win A	Forensics Criteria B	Personal Criteria C
I Forensics Expert	4 (Arbitrary weight if decision gained)	4 (Assign up to 4)	2 (Assign up to 2)
II Lay	3 (Also arbitrary if decision)	2 (Assign up to 2)	1 (Maximum)
III Participant	Not to be used	2 (Maximum)	2 (Maximum)

Written Comments:

Clarification of boxes with identifying coordinates such as I-A if by forensics judge on decision, II-C if by lay judge on personal elements.

Reaction to evaluation method itself.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE ABSTRACT

Round I	8:00-9:00	Debate
	9:00-9:30	Revealation Session
Round II	10:00-11:00	Debate
	11:00-11:30	Revealation Session
	11:30-12:45	Lunch
Round III	12:45-1:45	Debate
	1:45-2:15	Revealation Session
Round IV	2:45-3:45	Debate
	3:45-4:15	Revealation Session
Round V	4:45-5:15	Debate
Or semi-finals if desired	5:15-5:45	Revealation Session
	5:45-7:15	Dinner
Round VI	7:15-8:15	Debate
Or finals if desired	8:15-8:45	Revealation Session
	9:00-9:30	Final Revealation and Critique